

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW SNAKE FROM SOUTHWEST AFRICA.

BY THOMAS BARBOUR.

Not long ago Professor Charles Palache brought to the Museum of Comparative Zoology a small but very interesting collection of reptiles. They came from Kolmanskop about seventy miles south of Lüderitzbucht and from the waterless region of the diamond fields. This desert, called the Nameb, is an arid coastal zone like the Tarapacá or Atacamá deserts and likewise owes its extreme aridity to a cold water current similar to the Humboldt stream off the Chilean coast. Oftimes years pass with no rainfall at all but the average, over a period of years, is about 0.5 inches a year. The Nameb is essentially lifeless except that after one of the rare rainfalls reptiles appear for a short time and then retire again for another long period of inactivity.

Apparently this region was little visited by German zoologists although, on account of the diamond fields, there was some rather extensive geological exploration.

This collection was made by Dr. Werner Beetz, who not only nursed Prof. Palache through a dangerous attack of typhoid fever but presented him with these specimens as well.

This novelty with which, therefore, it is a pleasure to associate Dr. Beetz's name, was found among such rare and little known forms as *Sepsina weberi* Roux, *Condylosaurus subtessellatus* (Smith) and *Ramphiophis multimaculatus* (Smith) and others.

The genus *Tarbophis* in which I have included this species is not particularly well defined and may possibly finally be merged with *Crotaphopeltis* from which it is separated by relatively minor dental character and by style of coloration. No species of the genus has been recorded from the Southwest Protectorate (formerly German Southwest Africa) but the species most

closely similar is likewise the nearest geographically, *Tarbophis semiannulatus* (Smith), being apparently closely allied and found in East, South Central and Southeast Africa. The new form is to be called

***Tarbophis beetzii*, sp. nov.**

Type M. C. Z., No. 16,728 from Kolmanskop, Southwest Protectorate, Africa. Collected by Dr. Werner Beetz. Type fresh and in fine preservation. Diagnosis: Similar to *T. semiannulatus* but differing in having 21 rows of scales instead of invariably having 19; in coloration, in having the anal entire and in several other minor features.

Description: Rostral perpendicular in profile; not visible from above and much wider than high; internasal broader than long, much shorter than the prefrontals; frontal very slightly longer than broad, a little longer than its distance from tip of snout; much shorter than the parietals; nasal divided; loreal almost square; one preocular widely occluded from the frontal, two post-oculars; temporals 2+3; nine upper labials, of which the third, fourth and fifth enter the eye; four lower labials touch the anterior chin shields which are very large; posterior chin shields small and widely separated; scales in 21 rows; ventrals, 218; anal entire; subcaudals 46 pairs.

Color, sandy buff above and below; the dorsal surface of the nape with a conspicuous crosswise marking, wider on the midline than laterally, also thirty-seven round, dark, middorsal spots on the body and many small flecks on the upper side of the tail. The sides of the body are very faintly clouded with dusky, the belly is immaculate.

Length of body, 220 mm.; of tail, 31 mm.